

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 6 and 11 are independent.

The Section 112 Rejections

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for withdrawing the §112 rejections.

The Section 102 Rejections

Claims 1, 4-6, 9-11, 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Fee et al., U.S. Patent 5, 726,788, (hereinafter "Fee"). Applicants disagree and traverse these rejections.

Applicants respectfully submit that Fee fails to teach or suggest a connection device that comprises an optical switch that receives ULR optical signals and connects at least one non-dedicated processing unit to one or more of the received signals based on a characteristic of each signal as in claim 1 and its dependent claims.

In contrast, Fee is silent with respect to the type of optical signals involved. Further, Applicants believe that Fee is not directed towards ULR signals because it repeatedly discloses the need for amplification of an optical signal by an amplifier 210 before the signal is input into an optical interface 208 or backplane 308 which, in turn, are connected to functional units 302. It is a characteristic of ULR signals that amplification is not always required; the opposite of the signals disclosed in Fee.

In addition, it does not appear that Fee discloses non-dedicated processing units. Though Fee's functional units 302 can apparently handle more than one optical signal (though that fact is not altogether clear from a reading of Fee), the units appear to be dedicated to a limited set of signals. In contrast, the processing units in the claims of the present invention are not dedicated to any one or more optical signals. Because of this, the claimed processing units can be used to

improve the characteristics of hundreds, if not thousands, of optical signals (see the specification, paragraph 28).

Because Fee does not teach each and every feature of the claimed inventions, Fee cannot provide a basis for a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102. Reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of claims 1, 4-6, 9-11, 14 and 15 is respectfully requested.

The Section 103 Rejections

Claims 2, 7 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fee in view of Wong et al., US Patent 6,624,927 (hereinafter "Wong"). Claims 3, 8 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fee in view of Sharma et al. US Patent 6,331,906 (hereinafter "Sharma"). Applicants respectfully disagree and traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 2 and 13 are allowable at least because these claims depend from allowable claims 1, 6 and 11 for the reasons set forth above as well as on their own merits.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the pending rejections and allowance of claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 12 and 13.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact John E. Curtin at the telephone number listed below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-3777 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By

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